



CITY OF HOUSTON

Municipal Courts Department

Annise Parker
Mayor

Honorable Barbara E. Hartle
Director and Presiding Judge
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NEWS RELEASE

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Re: Department Consolidation

Merged Municipal Courts Boasts Streamlined Services

HOUSTON, Texas – Houston Mayor Annise D. Parker and City Council recently amended the Code of Ordinances to combine the former Municipal Courts Judicial and Municipal Courts Administration Departments into one unified department, the Municipal Courts Department.

“The primary reason for the consolidation is to streamline court services and leadership under one authority,” stated Mayor Parker. *“I believe Judge Hartle has the experience and know-how to direct our courts to be even more responsive and efficient,”* she added.

The newly combined department will be led by the Honorable Barbara E. Hartle, who was appointed as Director and Presiding Judge May 5, 2010 by Mayor Parker.

“I look forward to working to continue to improve how we do business and serve the people who come to our courts,” stated Presiding Judge Barbara Hartle. *“I see this as an endorsement of the good work that had previously occurred within the two departments and I believe that we can do even better as one department,”* she further acknowledged.

Judge Hartle formerly served as an Associate Municipal Judge at the Municipal Courts from 2006-2009, and a full-time Judge from April 2009 until her appointment as Director and Presiding Judge this past May. Her background includes work with the Texas Department of Aging and Disability Services, the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, and the Texas Department of Criminal Justice. She also served as Assistant City Attorney for the City of Austin.

Sahira J. Abdool, who was appointed Director and Chief Clerk of the Municipal Courts Administration Department in 2007, will serve in the unified department as Deputy Director and Clerk of the Court.

In an effort to streamline the business processes of the court, Judge Hartle appointed Nelly Trevino Santos as Deputy Director to manage the Information Technology, Human Resources and Finance divisions while Ms. Abdool will continue to oversee Court Operations, Public Services and the collections activities of the One Call Solution Center.

Ms. Santos is a native Houstonian who began her career with the City of Houston as an Assistant City Attorney in 1994 and formerly worked in the judicial branch of Municipal Courts as an Assistant Director.

Court services have been unaffected by the merger, and all six Houston court locations continue to operate under the current scheduling.

The City of Houston Municipal Courts, which annually handles over 1.2 million civil and criminal cases such as traffic offenses and city ordinance violations, is among the largest court systems in the United States. For more information regarding the Municipal Courts, please visit the website at www.houstontx.gov/courts.